

CLAIMS

1. A sign language interpretation system which interconnects a videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons used by a deaf-mute person capable of using sign language, a videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons used by a non-deaf-mute person incapable of using sign language, and a videophone terminal for the sign language interpreter used by the sign language interpreter in order to provide sign language interpretation in a conversation between a deaf-mute person and a non-deaf-mute person over a videophone, characterized in that

said system comprises connection means equipped with a sign language interpreter registration table where the terminal number of said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters is registered, said connection means including a function to accept a call from said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons or said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons, a function to prompt a calling videophone terminal for which said call is accepted to enter the terminal number of the called terminal, a function to extract the terminal number of a sign language interpreter from said sign language interpreter registration table, a function to call the videophone terminal for sign language interpreters by using said extracted terminal number of the sign language interpreter, and a function to call the called videophone

terminal by using said acquired called terminal number and communications means including a function to synthesize at least a video from said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons and a video from said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters and transmit the resulting video to said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons, a function to transmit at least a video from said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons and a voice from said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters to said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons and a function to transmit at least a video from said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons and a voice from said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons to said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters.

2. The sign language interpretation system according to claim 1, characterized in that selection information for selecting a sign language interpreter is registered in said sign language interpreter registration table and that

said connection means includes a function to acquire the conditions for selecting a sign language interpreter from said calling videophone terminal and a function to extract the terminal number of a sign language interpreter who satisfies said extracted selection conditions from said sign language interpreter registration table.

3. The sign language interpretation system according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that an availability flag to indicate whether a sign language interpreter is available is registered in the sign language interpreter registration table and that

said connection means includes a function to extract the terminal number of an available sign language interpreter by referencing the availability flags in the sign language interpreter registration table.

4. The sign language interpretation system according to any one of claims 1 through 3, characterized in that said connection means includes a function to generate a text message to be transmitted to each of said terminals and that

said communications means includes a function to transmit said generated text message to each of said terminals.

5. The sign language interpretation system according to claim 4, characterized in that said connection means includes a function to generate a voice message to be transmitted to said terminal for non-deaf-mute persons and that

said communications means includes a function to transmit said generated voice message to said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons.

6. The sign language interpretation system according to any one of claims 1 through 5, characterized in that said connection means includes a function to register a term used during a conversation as instructed from each of said terminals and a function to extract said registered term and generate a telop as instructed from each of said terminals and that

said communications means includes a function to transmit said generated telop to each of said terminals.

7. The sign language interpretation system according to any one of Claims 1 through 6, characterized in that said communications means includes a function to transmit a video obtained by synthesizing a video from said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons or said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters as a main window and the other video as a sub window to said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons.

8. The sign language interpretation system according to any one of claims 1 through 7, characterized in that said communications means includes a function to transmit a video obtained by synthesizing a video from said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons as a main window and a video from said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters as a sub window to said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons.

9. The sign language interpretation system according to any one of claims 1 through 8, characterized in that said communications means includes a function to transmit a video obtained by synthesizing a video from said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons and a video from said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons to said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters.

10. A method for providing sign language interpretation in a conversation between a deaf-mute person and a non-deaf-mute person over a videophone, said method interconnecting a videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons used by a deaf-mute person capable of using sign language, a videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons used by a non-deaf-mute person incapable of using sign language, and a videophone terminal for the sign language interpreter used by the sign interpreter,

characterized in that a sign language interpreter registration table where the terminal number of said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters is registered, said method comprising steps of: accepting a call from said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons or said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons; acquiring the terminal number of a called terminal from said calling videophone terminal for which said call is accepted; extracting the

terminal number of a sign language interpreter from said sign language interpreter registration table; calling the videophone terminal for sign language interpreters by using said extracted terminal number of the sign language interpreter; calling the called videophone terminal by using said acquired called terminal number;

synthesizing at least a video from said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons and a video from said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters and transmitting the resulting video to said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons; transmitting at least a video from said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons and a voice from said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters to said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons; and transmitting at least a video from said videophone terminal for deaf-mute persons and a voice from said videophone terminal for non-deaf-mute persons to said videophone terminal for sign language interpreters.